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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

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TYRANTS OF OLD

Tyrants are not confined to the twentieth century. They were present when the world was young, and the Royal Ontario Museum has proof of it. Fifty million years ago, great flesh-eating reptiles roamed the North American west. The greatest of these was a monster whose name, **Tyrannosaurus rex,** is as impressive as was his mighty form. **Tyrannosaurus** measured 47 feet in length and stood 20 feet high.

The fossilized remains of this creature were found in the Hell creek district of Montana. A replica of its head has been acquired and now constitutes a spectacular exhibit in one of the Museum's galleries. It is four and one half feet long and three and one half feet high. The massive jaws are provided with long, dagger-like teeth, the largest of which is nearly six inches in length. These teeth served **Tyrannosaurus** as powerful weapons when attacking the slow-moving, bulky and bizarre plant-eating dinosaurs which were his meat. As his name implies, **Tyrannosaurus rex** was King-of-the-Tyrant-Lizards. He was probably the greatest living engine of death that the world has ever known.

MEADOW MOUSE—SABOTEUR

Southern Ontario has suffered from a plague of meadow mice this past winter according to reports received by the Royal Ontario Museum. Correspondents state that since the snow has melted it is now apparent that young fruit trees, vines, shrubs, and hedges, have been badly girdled. Meadow mice have eaten both the inner bark and the soft cambium layer beneath it, thus severing the life-line of the plant.

Maximum damage occurs when a winter of deep snow coincides with a high mouse population. Protected by the snow from hawks, shrikes and owls, meadow mice tunnel vigorously beneath this covering and eat almost everything within reach. They even burrow beneath the soil to get at the roots of plants. Unfortunately damage is complete by the time their ravages are discovered. Trees over two years old can be protected by applying a repellent wash such as creosote and tar to the trunks in the fall. A measure of protection can be given to garden shrubs and bushes by pounding down the snow about them.

Even in peace time the destruction caused by the meadow mouse is serious but in time of war, loss of valuable food-producing trees and vines takes on a graver aspect. The meadow mouse which attacks under cover of snow is an enemy and saboteur.

MUSEUM ATTENDANCE RECORDS BROKEN

An all-time high was recently established when 7,033 visitors passed the turnstiles of the Royal Ontario Museum on a Sunday afternoon. On the average, 39 persons entered the Museum per minute. War workers, members of the armed forces, residents, out-of-town visitors, children and adults, find diversion and mental refreshment in the Museum. Unquestionably, this institution of the people of Ontario, primarily developed for the promotion of science and education in time of peace, plays an important role in time of war.

EMERALDS FOR MAY

"An emerald in May keeps the demons away." About a thousand years ago gems were believed to exert their greatest power during the month to which they were dedicated. The wearer accordingly changed his adornments with each successive month. Later, it was believed that the greatest good fortune could be obtained by constantly wearing the stone of one's natal month.

Now, although superstitions connected with gems have almost disappeared, the idea of birthstones is still popular. Accepted lists vary considerably, but the emerald is usually considered to represent the month of May. Since earliest times among the most prized of gems, emeralds were credited with very great powers. Among other things, it was believed that they could improve or restore eyesight, prevent attack by venomous creatures or evil spirits, cure certain diseases, and impart prophetic ability.

Although mined in Egypt at the time of Cleopatra, emeralds now come chiefly from Columbia, South America. The story goes that when the Spaniards conquered Peru they found many beautiful emeralds in the Inca temples. Torture failed to reveal their source, but they were later accidentally discovered in Columbia. In fairly recent times old Inca mines have been uncovered there.

On enquiry at the Royal Ontario Museum we found that emerald is the clear, green, relatively rare variety of a common mineral called beryl. It is somewhat softer than the other precious stones (diamond, ruby and sapphire). At present standards it is the most valuable of gems, being worth 3 to 4 times the value of diamond, carat for carat.

PET OR PEST?

Now that spring house-cleaning has been completed, housewives will be particularly conscious of new cob-webs which appear. Cob-webs in houses are made by two species of spiders, according to T. B. Kurata, the spider expert of the Royal Ontario Museum. Although both kinds make an irregular, tangled, silken web in corners and crevices of buildings, one species is usually much more plentiful indoors and can well claim to be the Domestic Spider. Its body, which is slightly less than ¼ inch long, varies in coloration from a dirty white, with a few dark spots, to almost black. It wraps its eggs in a dense silken case and hangs it from the web. This spider is quite harmless. In fact, Mr. Kurata would like to convince housewives that it is somewhat beneficial because it preys on insects such as the domestic fly and the clothes moth. He keeps one domestic spider in his own kitchen for observation. Most persons, however, will consider the dust-gathering webs a nuisance. According to your point of view, then, the domestic spider is either a pet or pest.

MUSEUM HOURS

When in Toronto you will find the Museum open free from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and on Sundays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. As a war measure it is closed on Mondays. There is a 15c admission charge on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.